

REED, LOUIS HENRY

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SCRIPTORS-R
(CASTS)

Statues of Abraham Lincoln

Louis H. Reed

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

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INDIANA STATE LIBRARY

LOUIS J. BAILEY, DIRECTOR
INDIANA DIVISION, ESTHER U. MCNITT, CHIEF
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

April 18, 1931

Dr. Louis A. Warren
Lincoln National Life Insurance Co.
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

My dear Dr. Warren:

I enclose a clipping which doubtless you have already seen but which will be of interest in case you have not.

Miss Stoler will have the broadsides photostated as soon as she hears from you. I think you expected to let her know more definitely concerning one or two of them.

The following paragraph is copied from Mrs. H. B. Burnet's "Art and Artists of Indiana" page 68. "When the body of the martyred President Abraham Lincoln lay in state in the Indiana Capitol building, in April, 1865, a death-mask was made by Louis Henri Reed. He was a nephew of B. K. Foster, who was at that time State Librarian and custodian, and through whom the privilege was obtained. From this death-mask was made a medallion in bas-relief, which is an excellent likeness of the great President."

I called up Mrs. Burnet and asked her where she got her information, and she said that she had all her original notes yet and would look it up some time. I have found her book quite accurate and I think she has been quite sure of her information before she put it in print, so I am inclined to think that her information concerning this bas-relief is accurate.

Yours very sincerely,

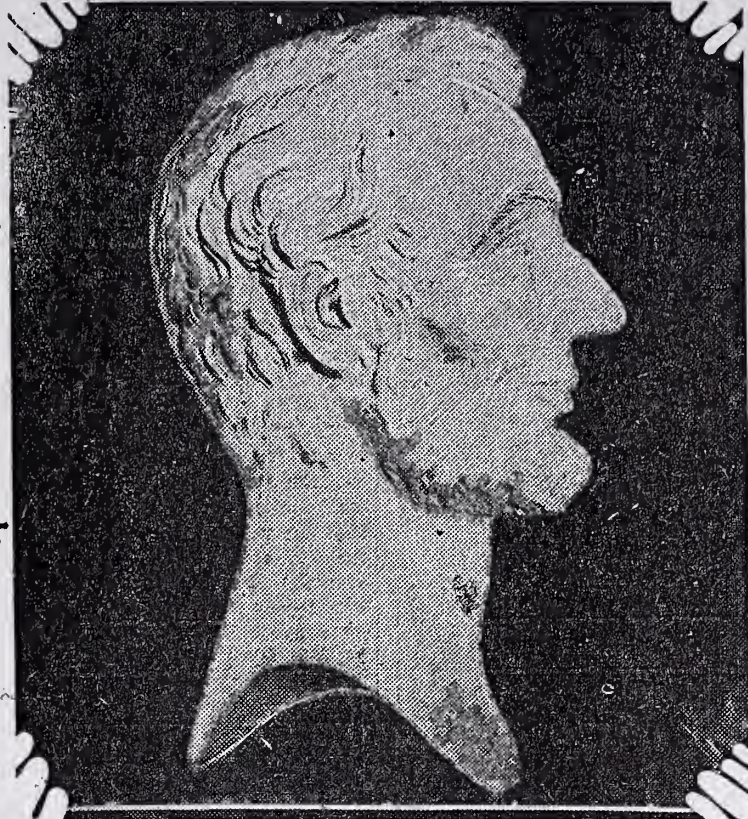
Esther U. McNitt

Chief, Indiana Division.

EUM:E

All Around the Town

The News, Oct. 13, 1930-



During the national encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic in Indianapolis in September, 1893, the attention of the veterans in the great parade was attracted to a window in Illinois street in which was presented an unusual display. It was the bas relief in plaster of the head of Abraham Lincoln, shown in the picture, hung on the outside of the window, appropriately draped, and with the words, "Your Great Commander," printed on a large placard.

After the parade many of the veterans climbed the stairs leading to the window to obtain a better view, and to learn something of its history.

The following day, September 3, the Indianapolis Journal made reference to the display as follows:

"A decoration that would be very difficult to duplicate, as there are but two or three in existence, may be seen on the outer wall of Dr. W. B. Clarke's office on Illinois street, opposite the Bates house, and is of great historic interest. It is a bas relief of Abraham Lincoln, the martyred commander-in-chief of all the veterans here assembled, and was made from the cast taken from the features of the distinguished dead as he lay in state in this city in the old Statehouse during the memorable and im-

pressive trip to the tomb."

In his early history of "Indianapolis," Jacob P. Dunn says of this cast:

"There is another bit of sculpture in the State Library of some interest. It is a medallion bas relief of Lincoln done by Louis Henri Reed, a son of Enos B. Reed, publisher of the People. It was made from a death mask of Lincoln taken when his body lay in state in the old Statehouse in April, 1865. Reed was a nephew of B. K. Foster, who was state librarian and custodian of the building at the time and obtained the privilege through him."

An article April 8, 1910, on this piece of sculpture says Reed received permission to make the cast by Oliver P. Morton, who was Governor at that time. Of Reed, who died in his early

manhood after a lingering illness, the writer says: "He gave great promise of achievement as an artist, and his bas relief of Lincoln was considered the best of its kind." Later the writer adds: "But art at the time this was made, did not get the newspaper booming it now would receive. Would the copy of the death mask of a President nowadays, real of reputed, escape newspaper exploitation?"

This interesting "bit of sculpture" now reposes in an obscure corner of the State Library unseen, and practically unknown. Its mounting or frame is broken and unsightly, but the cast itself is unharmed except for the accumulated soil and dust of the years.

Bas relief is low relief in sculpture, a form of cutting in which the figures stand out very slightly from the background, a little higher than the flat relief of a coin. It would seem that this piece of sculpture would be classed as haute relief for it is raised to life like proportions, clear cut and distinct. It is in profile form.

LINECOLN LORE

No. 140

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

December 14, 1931

LINCOLN LORE

BULLETIN OF
THE LINCOLN
HISTORICAL
RESEARCH
FOUNDATION



ENDOWED BY
THE LINCOLN
NATIONAL LIFE
INSURANCE
COMPANY

Dr. Louis A. Warren - - - Editor

LIFE AND DEATH MASKS OF LINCOLN

The Life Masks

There seems to be much confusion about the famous life mask of Lincoln made by Leonard W. Volk, which is usually called a death mask.

We are not left in doubt about the making of this famous life mask as the story of its origin is told by Mr. Volk in *Century Magazine* and later reprinted in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* for July, 1915.

Mr. Volk first met Abraham Lincoln at Lincoln, Illinois, in 1858 and told him that he would like very much to make a bust of him. Mr. Lincoln promised that when the opportunity offered itself he would grant him that privilege.

It was nearly two years before Volk met Lincoln again. Volk had just returned from Washington to Chicago in the spring of 1860 when he read in the paper that Lincoln was in the city. He remembered the promise Lincoln had made to give him some sittings and he immediately approached the president on the subject.

Appointments were made for his visits to the Volk studio in the Portland Block, just after breakfast. Mr. Volk said that Lincoln was there promptly each morning and never failed to be on time.

As Lincoln was in Chicago for the famous Sand Bar Case which delayed him there from March 23 until April 4, it was during this time, presumably during the last week, that Lincoln gave Volk the sittings for the famous studies.

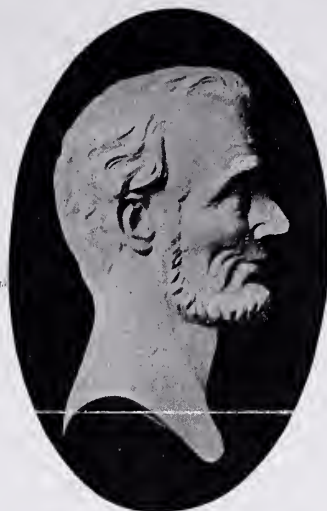
Upon the occasion of his first visit Lincoln said:

"Mr. Volk, I have never sat before to sculptor or painter—only for daguerreotypes and photographs. What shall I do?"

Mr. Volk advised that he would only take the measurement of his head and shoulders then and the next morning, Saturday, he would make a cast of his face.

Mr. Volk describes Lincoln's reaction to the making of the mask as follows:

"He sat naturally in the chair when I made the cast and saw every move I



Bas-relief from Reed's Death Mask
of Lincoln

made in a mirror opposite, as I put the plaster on without interference with his eyesight or his free breathing through his nostrils. It was about an hour before the mold was ready to be removed, and being all in one piece, with both ears perfectly taken, it clung pretty hard, as the cheek-bones were higher than the jaws at the lobe of the ear. He bent his head low and took hold of the mold and gradually worked it off without breaking or injury."

Mr. Volk says that by previous appointment he was to cast Mr. Lincoln's hands on the Sunday morning after his nomination, and at 9 a. m. Mr. Lincoln received him in the dining room of his home where the casts were made. The casts of Lincoln's hands are often associated with the life mask.

R. W. Gilder served as chairman of the committee which, in the early nineties, purchased the original life mask from Leonard W. Volk for \$1,500. The committee had a bronze replica of the mask made, and both were then presented to the Smithsonian Institute.

Clark Mills also is said to have made a life mask of Lincoln in February, 1865. It looks so gaunt and haggard it is often referred to as a death mask. A brief biographic sketch of Mills says that, "The latter part of his life was spent in making busts, and he invented a method of putting plaster on the face of his subjects, thereby adding greatly to the truthfulness of his casts."

The Death Masks

A study of the traditional death masks of Lincoln presents a much more difficult problem than the well preserved story of the life mask.

The Lincoln Historical Research Foundation has just recently come into possession of a bas-relief of Lincoln

said to have been reproduced from a death mask made by Louis Henri Reed.

A story of this death mask appearing in the *Indianapolis News* for April 8, 1910, follows:

"One of Henri's early works, if not his best, was a plaster bas-relief of Abraham Lincoln, claimed by some to have been made from a death mask taken from the martyred President's face as he lay in state at the old capitol here by special permission of Governor Morton. . . .

"There were only two, or, perhaps, three, copies of this made. One of these, because of oversight somewhere, I was fortunate enough to procure twenty years ago in a Washington street auction house, said at the time to be part of the effects of Mr. Wallace then sold. Its fidelity as a likeness was certainly equal to any shown of the same subject at the recent Saint Gaudens exhibit here.

"This has relief, or, more properly, haute relief, of the head and neck of Mr. Lincoln was in full side view, the whole oval being 26 by 21 inches, the head and neck 20 inches long. During the national encampment of the G. A. R. here, in 1893, I hung it from my office window, appropriately draped, with the words, 'Your Great Commander,' under it on a large printed placard. This attracted universal attention as the great parade went by, and soon many veterans came up the stairs to obtain a closer view of it."

"The only replica of this work I know of was held by Ben L. Darrow, the Meridian street shoe man, living in Illinois street, which Mrs. Darrow told me was a present from Mr. Reed; but, as that family is broken up by death, it would be difficult to locate it, unless the son, Philo, of Chicago, has it. Their copy was the prettier, as mine was unframed, while theirs they had put in a deep wooden frame and covered with glass.

"The fate of mine was as tragic as those of its maker and subject. One night we were awakened by a tremendous crash, and found that the heavy mass had broken the cord that held it high on the wall, and the work of art was smashed to smithereens and beyond the hope of repair."

The framed copy mentioned in the above article is probably the same one now in possession of the Indiana State Library. This and the one in possession of the Lincoln Historical Research Foundation are the only two known to exist.

Some Lincoln authorities have claimed that another death mask of Lincoln was made while the body was lying in state in the Capitol at Washington, and other traditions recall one taken at Springfield after the arrival of the body. Evidence is not at hand to confirm either of these statements.

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10/10/18

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4TH VICE PRESIDENT
MRS. CHARLES A. PFAFFLIN

HISTORIAN
MRS. OVID BUTLER JAMESON

April 3, 1935.

Dear Mrs. Burnett:

I am enclosing one of my features which appeared in the News, under date of Oct. 13, 1930, on the death mask of Lincoln. It will give you all the information I found in Mr. Dunn's early history of "Indianapolis," besides comments at the time it was displayed in 1893. The News made this out of it for me. This was in my scrap book that Mrs. Coate read from yesterday morning, but evidently I was too tired, or my brain too dull to think of it at the time. I have learned since I found this cast that there is another in existence. The State Library has one, and some organization here has the other. It would seem that, like many other things, it is deserving of more attention than it receives. I am very happy to pass this information on to you.

Most sincerely,

April 26 - 1935

Dear Mr. Warren;

I believe this is the information you desired concerning the Lincoln death mask. I had my information from the same source -

Nellie G. Owens
4417 North Standard Avenue
Indianapolis
Sincerely Mrs. H. B. Burnett

REED'S BAS-RELIEF OF LINCOLN'S DEATH MASK

Was Mask Made While He Lay in
State in City?

WORK OF A YOUNG ARTIST

"The sudden death of artist Louis H. Reed, son of the veteran editor Enos B. Reed, after years of illness, and the death of his aged mother was pathetic," said Dr. W. B. Clarke. "As The News truly said, 'During his early education as an artist he gave promise of achieving fame.' From professional visits to the family I remember Mrs. Reed particularly for her passionate love for flowers and her great collection of them, her display of cacti probably being the most extensive in the city.

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"One of Henri's (~~for that is the way he liked to see his name~~) early works, if not his best, was a plaster bas-relief of Abraham Lincoln, claimed by some to have been made from a death mask taken from the martyred President's face as he lay in state at the old capitol here by special permission of Governor Morton. Colonel Holloway, the Governor's secretary, probably is the one person best qualified to affirm or deny that claim. . . .

"But 'art,' at the time this was made, did not get the newspaper booming it now would receive. Would the copy from the death mask of a President nowadays, real or reputed, escape newspaper exploitation?

~~Two or Three Copies Made.~~

"There were only two, or, perhaps, three, copies of this made. One of these, because of oversight somewhere, I was fortunate enough to procure twenty years ago in a Washington street auction house, said at the time to be part of the effects of Mr. Wallace then sold. Its fidelity as a likeness was certainly equal to any shown of the same subject at the recent Saint Gaudens exhibit here.

"This bas-relief, or, more properly, haute relief, of the head and neck of Mr. Lincoln was in full side view, the whole oval being 26 by 21 inches, the head and neck twenty inches long. During the national encampment of the G. A. R. here, in 1893, I hung it from my office window, appropriately draped, with the words, 'Your Great Commander,' under it on a large printed placard. This attracted universal attention as the great parade went by, and soon many veterans came up the stairs to obtain a closer view of it. The next day the Indianapolis Journal, of September 3, 1893, made this reference to the decoration:

" 'A decoration that would be very difficult to duplicate, as there are but two or three in existence, may be seen on the outer wall of Dr. W. B. Clarke's office, on Illinois street, opposite the Bates house, and it is one of great historical interest. It is a bas-relief of Abraham Lincoln, the martyred commander-in-chief of all the veterans that are here assembled, and was made from the cast taken from the features of the distinguished dead as he lay in state in this city at the statehouse during the memorable and impressive trip to the tomb.'

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Inquiries and Offers

"Kate Field's Washington of March 28, 1894, also contained a description of the work. As a result of these and other publications I have received inquiries from all over the country, requests for photographs of the bas-relief, offers of purchase, etc., the last only recently from the Oldroyd Lincoln memorial collection, where are exhibited over three thousand articles pertaining to Lincoln in the house in which he died, 516 Tenth street, Washington.

"The only replica of this work I know of was held by Ben L. Darrow, the Meridian street shoe man, living in Illinois street, which Mrs. Darrow told me was a present from Mr. Reed, but, as that family is broken up by death, it would be difficult to locate it, unless the son, Philo, of Chicago, has it. Their copy was the prettier, as mine was unframed, while theirs they had put in a deep wooden frame and covered with glass.

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~~Copied from The Indianapolis News, April 8, 1910, p.8.c.3.~~

April 29, 1935

Mrs. H. B. Burnet
4417 N. Pennsylvania
Indianapolis, Indiana

My dear Mrs. Burnet:

It was very kind of you indeed to remember to forward the information about the Reed profile of Lincoln made from the mask.

It is to be regretted that some members of the Clubs in Indianapolis interested in sculpture did not have a more prominent part in placing of the Lincoln statue.

We knew nothing at all here of the selection of the artist and the type of work which would be reproduced, and only about four or five days before the dedication were we advised that the committee would be pleased to have us speak before the gathering.

The day of the dedication was very unfavorable, so that there were very few in attendance, and I have had several letters from Indianapolis indicating that many people who would have attended knew nothing at all about the date of the dedication.

Thanking you for your many courtesies in the past, I am

Respectfully yours,

LAW:EB

Director
Lincoln National Life Foundation

REED, LOUIS HENRY

DRAWING 23

SCUPTORS-R
(CASTS)

